

KITTENS AND CATS – WHAT YOU NEED TO CONSIDER

Kittens and cats need lots of care to keep them happy and healthy.

Where to get your pet

Consider carefully what sort of pet will best match your lifestyle. Do you have sufficient time/energy for a kitten? Could you give a loving home to a rescue cat? This website should help you www.your-right-pet.org.uk.

Register with a vet

Do this straight away, and make an appointment to get your new pet checked over as soon as possible. [Click here](#) or telephone **02476 464789** to register with us today! Your pet should be vaccinated and wormed regularly to keep them healthy. All our vaccinations include a **free** full health examination with a fully-qualified Veterinary Surgeon. Should your pet become ill, we offer [Consultations](#) and comprehensive [Facilities](#) to better diagnose and treat your pet.

Pet Insurance

You may have budgeted for routine healthcare costs such as vaccination and parasite treatment, but what if your pet is involved in an accident or is diagnosed with a serious disease requiring expensive or ongoing treatment? Pet insurance helps you budget for the unexpected, and we recommend you seriously consider it. Ask one of our fully-qualified Vets or Nurses for advice about the different types of insurance. And remember, if you bring your kitten in to us for their primary vaccination course, you will get 4 weeks' **free** insurance as part of our Kitten Package.



Microchipping

We advise that all pets should be microchipped, as recommended by Cats Protection and other major animal welfare organisations. Microchipping greatly increases the chances of you and your pet being reunited should they be lost or stolen. For more information visit: www.pet-works.net/microchipping and watch our [offers page](#) for regular microchip promotions.

Neutering

We recommend your growing cat is neutered. Read our [neutering leaflet](#) to find out why.



A comfortable bed

A cosy, safe place for your pet to rest is important. Your cat's bed should be kept in a quiet, dry, draught-free area. Some prefer beds with a roof, others an open style. The soft bedding needs to be easily cleaned and washed regularly. If you have more than one cat, make sure you provide a separate bed for each, well apart from each other. Cats like high places, so try to ensure safe access to high shelves or the tops of cupboards. They also like places to hide so allow access under chairs/beds where possible.

Somewhere suitable to toilet

Cats need a quiet place to toilet, easily-accessed and away from food and water. You should provide a litter tray or an outside area or both. With litter, try to keep to the same type as many cats develop a preference. If you have more than one cat, provide as many litter trays as there are cats, plus one. This is important as if they are forced to share they can often become stressed and develop urinary problems. Wear gloves when cleaning out your cat's litter tray. Pregnant women should take particular care, due to the possible risk from Toxoplasmosis, which can be found in cat faeces.



Cats and Company

Cats like their own company and should generally be kept on their own. Living with other cats is a common cause of chronic stress. If more than one cat is kept, each should have their own litter tray, cat bed, hiding place, scratching post and feeding bowl. These should be positioned all around the house so that the cats can choose to avoid each other.

Feeding your cat

A cat needs two shallow bowls; one for water, to which they should have constant access to a freshly supply, and one for food. Pottery bowls are ideal as they are easy to clean. Replace them if they are chipped or cracked.



Kittens start to eat solid foods from about three weeks and are fully weaned at about eight weeks. At first they need small meals often (about four or five a day) but by about six months, two meals a day are usually fine. This can continue throughout their adult life, depending on your cat's preference.

Cats need a healthy balanced diet that meets their nutritional needs. They are true carnivores, meaning they have to eat certain nutrients that are only found in meat or commercial cat food. Feeding a complete, commercial cat food is normally preferable to a homemade diet as it's not easy to achieve the correct balance of nutrients if you make your cat's diet yourself.



One of the best ways to achieve the correct balance of nutrients is to feed according to 'life stage'. This means feeding a different diet according to whether your cat is a kitten, adult or senior cat, because cats of different ages have different nutritional requirements. For example, kittens need more calories in their food because they are so energetic. Several leading brands of commercially available cat food offer different foods for different life stages. We recommend and stock Purina Pro Plan across our 3 sites.

Follow the packet feeding guidelines and weigh the food out to check you're getting it right. Feeding the right amount is important as obesity is a common and growing problem among UK pets, leading to health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and arthritis. You can put the entire measured amount down at once, give it as several small meals or divide it into a meal for morning and one for evening - it depends on the cat's preference and your lifestyle, but you should try to cater for your cat's preferences as far as you can.

If treats are given, you must reduce your cat's daily food ration accordingly, or these extra calories will be turned into fat. You don't need to use food to show cats that you love them – playing games with them and offering affection are better for their waistline! If you can't resist feeding treats once in a while, give a small amount of lean meat.

Holidays

If you go on holiday, you need to arrange for someone responsible to care for your cat. Cats can be booked into catteries, or alternatively a friend or professional “pet-sitter” could look after them. Well-run catteries won’t allow cats to board if they haven’t been vaccinated, so make sure you check your cat’s vaccinations have been given within the last 12 months. [Click here](#) for links to local petsitters and catteries.



Interaction and Play

If you are thinking about getting a kitten, check that they have been exposed to different people and other pets, as well as normal household sounds at the breeder’s house – this is called socialisation. You should continue to give your kitten lots of positive experiences when they arrive at their new home, to ensure they grow into a friendly, well-adjusted cat.

Kittens love playing, which provides good exercise and allows them to behave naturally. Most adult cats also enjoy daily play with their owners. The best types of toys are those that encourage chasing and hunting-type behaviour ie those that move quickly or unpredictably. Fishing-rod type toys or balls are good options. Scratching is also part of normal cat behaviour and is used to keep their claws healthy and leave scent marks. A scratching post needs to be stable and tall enough for your cat to exercise at full body stretch. If it doesn’t allow this, the cat may choose your furniture instead!

Cat Flaps

A cat flap can be a good way of giving your cat free access to the garden but can also cause problems if other cats are using the flap to come into the home. This can be very stressful for cats and can contribute to certain medical problems. If this is happening you should consider using a cat flap that is operated by a collar or microchip. See www.pet-works.net/microchipping



Grooming

All cats can benefit from grooming, and some longer-haired breeds will need regular attention..